

## Certification Corner

# It Finally Happened!

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National Certification Council Chair



**O**n June 27, 1992, 888 practitioners took the first National Certification Examination for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork. The examination was given at 44 sites nationwide, including one in Canada. The largest number of candidates at a single site was in Washington, D.C., where 75 candidates were greeted with lemonade and fruit as they left the examination room at the University of Maryland.

AMTA President Elliot Greene commented on his feelings about the examination: "I had a really good feeling to see the unfolding of a project that has been three and a half years in the making. It was an exciting experience to be with so many other massage therapists who shared a genuine sense of fellowship, warmth, and commitment to our profession." Benny Vaughn, AMTA First Vice President, noted, "It demonstrated the first real step toward national recognition of massage therapy as a health profession."

Bill Hogan, Vice President of The Psychological Corporation, the testing company that designed and administered the examination, said: "This is one of the largest certification test premieres we have ever administered." Based on his experience with other certification projects, it is expected that the December examination will have 30 to 50% more candidates.

Beverly Schoenberger, a physical therapist who is also Director of Education for the Connecticut Center for Massage Therapy, said the National Certification Council and the Examination Committee "did a fabulous job.

The examination was very fair." Fairness was part of the feedback received from John Fred Spack, AMTA Government Relations Committee Chair from Ohio. John explained that "the test was fair, well-rounded, and professionally designed."

Some candidates have commented that the examination was "comprehensive and hard" while others have said it was "too easy." Raymond Moriyasu, AMTA Third Vice President said, "The examination was challenging, especially if you've been out of school for ten years or more. The experience was educational as well. There are several areas I want to continue reviewing." Ralph Stephens, AMTA Central District Representative from Iowa, said, "The examination was fantastic. It was well constructed and will challenge the entry-level massage therapist."

### Results Just In!

As we are going to press, the results of the first National Certification Examination are being studied. 97.5% of those taking the examination passed.

This high pass rate reflects the level of training and experience of the group taking the entry level examination. Approximately 75% had 500-1000+ hours of therapeutic massage and bodywork training; 55% had 3 or more years experience in the profession; 85% received their training in schools; 49% had college degrees and 17% were junior college or vocational program graduates.

Practitioners from a variety of disciplines were represented, and listed their primary disciplines as: 24% Traditional European; 23% Contemporary

Western; 18% Structural/Functional/Movement Integration; 5% Oriental; 3% Energetic; and 24% Eclectic. Main practice setting also varied with 50% in private practice; 16% in other health professionals office; 6% in fitness center/health club; 6% in holistic health center; and 11% in some other settings.

Congratulations to the first group Nationally Certified in Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork!

### Second Item Writing Workshop

Preparation for the National Certification Examination to be given in December is well underway. The item (question) bank must be continually renewed and expanded, and must reflect the data collected from the 1990 Job Analysis Survey. Dorothy Schwartzberg, Examination Committee Chair, organized a 21 member Item Writing Workshop in June at the Psychological Corporation headquarters in San Antonio, TX. Item writers were from various geographic regions, discipline areas, levels of experience, and proficiency in test construction.

### The December Examination

The next examination will be held throughout the United States on December 12th, 1992. To all those who were waiting to see how the first examination turned out — now's your chance to meet the challenge of the profession.

Applications must be received by the regular deadline of October 30th, or the extended deadline of November 14th. Applications and Candidate

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# Aiding the Olympic Dream

In the months leading up to the Summer Olympics in Barcelona, members of the AMTA National Sports Massage Team did their part to make the Olympic dream come true for young American athletes. AMTA was well represented at the United States Olympic Gymnastic Trials in Baltimore and the United States Olympic Track & Field Trials in New Orleans.

Neil MacDonald, physical therapist and Medical Director for the U.S. Gymnastic Trials, asked Maryland Chapter President Jeff Young to coordinate the massage services provided at the trials. The presence of massage therapists at all practice sessions and competitions was required.

Jeff put together a team of 12 massage therapists from six different states. Participating AMTA members were: Carey Bland (MD), Deborah Cadoux (MD), Pat Caufield (CT), Vicki Johnson (WY), Harvey Heyman (MD), Christine Reay (MI), Bob Rogers (MD), and Paul Welliver (MD).

Massage therapists worked closely with the medical support staff provided by the Union Memorial Hospital Sports Medicine Center in Baltimore. "An extraordinary level of cooperation among the massage therapists, physical therapists, and athletic trainers was sustained throughout the competition," Jeff Young remarked. "Our presence exemplified the standards and professionalism associated with AMTA members."

After the trials, Jeff received a letter from Neil MacDonald, thanking the massage therapists for doing a tremendous job. "Clearly your staff had the greatest impact on the largest number of people associated with the event," his letter stated. He went on to say that he would like to further explore the

role massage therapy could play at the Union Memorial Sport Medicine and Spine Centers.

"When the voice of inspiration calls you, answer that call," Lucien Caillouet and Lisa Holk thought when they volunteered their services to the 1992 U.S. Olympic Track & Field Trials in New Orleans. The two National Sports Massage Team members from Illinois made the trip down to Bayou country because they knew they were needed and they wanted to be part of something big.

Their initiative is representative of the other massage therapists who came from around the country to work at the trials. The fact that there wasn't a coordinated team effort didn't stop all the individuals who had the desire to work with the athletes.

Lucien Caillouet reported that the athletes quickly took advantage of the "hands-on" work and expressed appreciation for the massage treatments as well as the educational principles shared by the massage therapists. "All benefitted from the team approach," Lucien commented, "where various practitioners worked with the athlete according to the therapist's specialty and the athlete's needs." The coaches directed the massage therapists to work on specific muscle groups. Lucien also noted that massage therapists worked alongside the chiropractic team.

"It was wonderful to be part of the U.S. Olympic effort," Lucien said. "The involvement of massage therapists represented another Olympian leap towards visibility for the profession and defining our niche as health professionals." ♦

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Handbooks can be obtained by writing to: National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork, P.O. Box 268140, Chicago, IL 60626. The telephone number is (312) 761-7684.

## A Personal Note

I was one of the first 888 to sit for the National Certification Examination. I would like to add my comments and feelings about the power of that experience. I admit, I've got a great deal invested in this project. As National Certification Council Chair, it has been a major part of my professional life for almost three years. I have digested volumes of information on a wide assortment of topics. I have met and discussed these topics with caring professionals from all 50 states and Canada. So, as I sat for the examination I was aware of an overwhelming sense of completion, mixed with the uncertainty, doubt, and anxiety of a nervous parent waiting to see his child's face for the first time.

I opened the examination booklet and each question resonated for me the image I have of our profession. Ours is a field of study that is broad in certain areas, specific in others, and always views the client's/patient's health and safety as the underlying reason of why we serve the public. The examination was challenging, much like every day in the clinic proves to be. Like real life, the examination made me realize that I need to continue to "sharpen my saw," refine my skills, and improve my knowledge bank. I can only hope this examination will do for the profession what we as therapists do for those who receive the benefits of our skills.

Thanks again to all who have worked with diligence and professionalism in seeing this project to its fruition—especially my fellow members of the National Certification Council. ♦